



CONSCIOUS CONSUMERISM

What is Conscious Consumerism?

- Conscious consumerism is the practice of buying items produced by ethically responsible means that have supply chains free of labor exploitation.
- This means the labor used was not exploitive, forced, or by children.

How Does Conscious Consumerism Relate to Human Trafficking?

- Many products bought in the United States have low prices due to their means of production. Some employers exploit laborers or hold trafficked individuals in exploitative work conditions to keep product costs low.
- The practice of exploitative labor has given many people in economically developed countries an artificially low perception of product costs.
- It has become difficult to trace the origin of the products because of the complexity of the supply chains.
- Items documented as using forced labor in their production include:
 - Bricks
 - Cattle
 - Coffee
 - Cotton
 - Gold
 - Nuts
 - Rubber
 - Rice
 - Tobacco

What Are Some Steps Towards Transparency?

- The California Transparency in Supply Chain Act requires all retailers and manufacturers doing business in California and earning at least \$100 million annually to disclose what steps they are taking to eliminate human trafficking in their supply chains. The Act took effect in January 2012.
- The UK's Modern Slavery Act 2015 has a "Transparency in Supply Chains" clause which requires a similar report from all companies with annual revenues of over £36 million.
 - The laws require disclosure but not that corporations actually take action. Making corporations act on what they disclose is often up to consumers.

How Can You be a Conscious Consumer?

- Research companies and manufacturers to see if they have transparency clauses.
 - Look at rankings by organizations like Verité or Free2Work.
- Use local products with shorter supply chains.

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- The Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking, Notes from Amanda Finger, "Deconstructing Demand," October 22, 2011
- Verité; "Forced Labor Commodity Atlas," <http://www.verite.org/commodities>, 2014